

Serial No.: 10/626,253
Amdt. Dated: July 13, 2005
Reply to Office action of May 13, 2005.

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Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

I-31(canceled)

32. (previously presented) A method of depositing a uniform coating on a planar surface of a substrate, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) providing the substrate having the planar surface to a deposition chamber;
- b) evacuating the deposition chamber to a predetermined deposition pressure;
- c) generating a plurality of plasmas from at least one array of a plurality of plasma sources;
- d) injecting at least one reactant gas into each of the plurality of plasmas through at least one common reactant gas injector such that a first flow rate of the at least one reactant gas into a first plasma is substantially equal to a second flow rate of the at least one reactant gas into a second plasma, wherein said at least one common reactant gas injector comprising a tubular -walled structure having two linear portions parallel to each other and two end portions connecting the linear portions is disposed between anodes of the plasma sources and the substrate and is circumferentially disposed with respect to the plasma sources;
- e) flowing the at least one reactant gas and the plurality of plasmas into the deposition chamber toward the substrate; and
- f) reacting the at least one reactant gas with the plurality of plasmas to form the coating on the planar surface of the substrate.

33. (original) The method according to claim 32, wherein at least one of the plurality of plasma sources is an expanding thermal plasma source having a cathode, an anode, and an inlet for a non-reactive plasma source gas disposed in a plasma chamber.

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34. (original) The method according to claim 33, wherein the step of flowing the at least one reactant gas and the plurality of plasmas into the deposition chamber toward the substrate includes the steps of:

- a) maintaining the deposition chamber at a second predetermined pressure, wherein the second predetermined pressure is less than a first pressure in the plasma chamber; and
- b) expanding the plurality of plasmas from the plasma chamber into the deposition chamber toward the substrate.

35. (original) The method according to claim 32, wherein the step of injecting a reactant gas into the plurality of plasmas comprises:

- a) supplying the at least one reactant gas from a reactant gas source to the at least one common reactant gas injector;
- b) passing the at least one reactant gas through a first plurality of orifices in the common reactant gas injector proximate to the first plasma and a second plurality of orifices proximate to the second plasma;
- c) directing the at least one reactant gas through the first plurality of orifices into the first plasma at a first flow rate; and
- d) directing the at least one reactant gas through the second plurality of orifices into the second plasma at a second flow rate, the first flow rate being substantially equal to the second flow rate.

36. (original) The method according to claim 35, wherein the first plurality of orifices comprises a first predetermined number of orifices and the second plurality of orifices comprises a second predetermined number of orifices, and wherein the first predetermined number is equal to the second predetermined number.

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37. (original) The method according to claim 35, wherein the first plurality of orifices comprises a first predetermined number of orifices and the second plurality of orifices comprises a second predetermined number of orifices, and wherein the first predetermined number is different from the second predetermined number.

38. (original) The method according to claim 35, wherein each of the first plurality of orifices has a first conductance and each of the second plurality of orifices has a second conductance, wherein the first conductance is equal to the second conductance.

39. (original) The method according to claim 35, wherein each of the first plurality of orifices has a first conductance and each of the second plurality of orifices has a second conductance, wherein the first conductance is different from the second conductance.

40. (currently amended) A method of injecting at least one reactant gas into a plurality of plasmas generated by an array of a plurality of plasma sources such that a first flow rate of the at least one reactant gas into a first plasma is substantially equal to a second flow rate of the at least one reactant gas into a second plasma, the method comprising the steps of:

a) supplying the at least one reactant gas from a reactant gas source to a common reactant gas injector, wherein said gas injector comprising a tubular-walled structure having two linear portions parallel to each other and two end portions connecting the linear portions is disposed between anodes of the plasma sources and the substrate and is circumferentially disposed with respect to the plasma sources;

b) passing the at least one reactant gas through a first plurality of orifices in the common reactant gas injector proximate to the first plasma, wherein the first plurality of orifices is oriented such that the at least one reactant gas is directed into the first plasma at a first predetermined flow rate; and

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c) passing the at least one reactant gas through a second plurality of orifices in the common reactant gas injector proximate to the second plasma, wherein the second plurality of orifices is oriented such that the at least one reactant gas is directed into the second plasma at a second predetermined flow rate, wherein the second predetermined flow rate is substantially equal to the first predetermined flow rate.

41. (original) The method according to claim 40, wherein the step of passing the at least one reactant gas through a first plurality of orifices in the common reactant gas injector comprises passing the at least one reactant gas through a first predetermined number of orifices, and wherein the step of passing the at least one reactant gas through a second plurality of orifices comprises passing the at least one reactant gas through a second predetermined number of orifices.

42. (original) The method according to claim 40, wherein the first predetermined number is different from the second predetermined number.

43. (original) The method according to claim 40, wherein each of the first plurality of orifices has a first conductance, and each of the second plurality of orifices has a second conductance, and wherein the second conductance is different from the first conductance.

44. (currently amended) A substrate having a uniform coating deposited on a planar surface, wherein the uniform coating is deposited by:

a) providing the substrate having the surface to a deposition chamber, wherein the deposition chamber is in fluid communication with at least one array of a plurality of plasma sources, wherein at least one of the plurality of plasma sources is an expanding thermal plasma source having a cathode, an anode and an inlet for a non-reactive plasma source gas disposed in a plasma chamber, the plasma chamber being in fluid communication with the deposition chamber;

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- b) evacuating the deposition chamber to a predetermined deposition pressure and the plasma chamber to a predetermined first pressure, wherein the predetermined deposition pressure is less than the predetermined first pressure;
- c) generating a plurality of plasmas in the plurality of plasma sources and flowing the plurality of plasmas into said deposition chamber;
- d) injecting at least one reactant gas through at least one common gas injector into each of the plurality of plasmas as the plurality of plasmas flows into the deposition chamber such that a first flow rate of the at least one reactant gas into a first plasma is substantially equal to a second flow rate of the at least one reactant gas into a second plasma, wherein said at least one common reactant gas injector comprising a tubular – walled structure having two linear portions parallel to each other and two end portions connecting the linear portions is disposed between anodes of the plasma sources and the substrate and is circumferentially disposed with respect to the plasma sources;
- e) flowing the at least one reactant gas and the plurality of plasmas into the deposition chamber toward the substrate; and
- f) reacting the at least one reactant gas with each of the plurality of plasmas to form the coating on the surface of the substrate.